

NEWS from



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SUPERVISORS SLAP TIGHTER RESTRICTIONS ON SPECIAL EVENTS; POSTMUS SAYS ORDINANCE WILL HELP STOP 'RAVE' CONCERTS

SAN BERNARDINO—The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today unanimously approved modifications to the County Development Code affecting Temporary Special Event permits, resulting in increased requirements for sponsors of special events, including music events.

First District Supervisor Bill Postmus said he and his staff involved themselves in the development of the ordinance because of its potential to help law enforcement officials control and prevent all-night events commonly known as "rave" concerts.

"This ordinance is needed," Postmus said. "It will assist our local law enforcement in putting down rave concerts, which have been detrimental to public safety and have cost the County substantial amounts of money and law enforcement resources."

"Rave concerts are by definition a public nuisance," Postmus added. "These events are notorious for illegal drug use, violence and disturbing the peace. We have seen time after time promoters pushing these events, thinking they can do whatever they want in our unincorporated communities. Our message to them is 'not in my backyard.'"

Postmus said while the ordinance doesn't ban raves outright, it strengthens restrictions and helps ensure adequate law enforcement protection surrounding such events.

"With this new ordinance, when rave operators don't secure the required permits prior to holding events for 200 or more people in unincorporated areas, or when they exceed the allowable numbers and other restrictions, their events will be deemed illegal and will be shut down," he said.

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The revised ordinance does the following:

- Changes the Minor Event-Class I from an anticipated attendance range of 500 to 5,000 people per day to a range of 500 to 1,000 people per day. It changes Minor Event-Class II to add music and intensive sporting events with an anticipated attendance of 200 to 500 people. Finally, it changes the definition of Major Event-Class I from an anticipated attendance of over 5,000 per day to over 1,000 per day.
- Adds to the definition of a "Major Event-Class II" "any sporting or music event that is advertised by means of mass media ... where a means of limiting attendees is not available."
- Adds the requirement that payment for the employment of the specified number of law enforcement officers shall be made in full 30 days in advance of the event.
- Adds to the list of unlawful acts anyone who "knowingly plays or broadcasts any live, recorded or synthesized music after 11 p.m. or before 7 a.m. at the site of a temporary special event, except as expressly authorized as a condition of a Temporary Use Permit."
- Adds the statement that "any event conducted without the required permit(s) is subject to closure at any time during the event. The promoter, business owner and/or land owner may be subject to cost recovery by the agencies participating in the closure."

Postmus, who criticized the County's handling of rave concerts prior to his election in November, said the previous Temporary Special Event Permit ordinance had serious deficiencies. "The previous ordinance caused law enforcement to wait until the population of an un-permitted event reached 500 before they could shut the event down," he said. "While law enforcement had to wait for these numbers to mount, our communities were exposed to unruly crowds of up to 499 people. This caused parking problems and heavy traffic on residential streets and freeways. It also caused negative environmental impacts, especially in the desert, and overloaded the dispatch center system and operators. Our county has expended large amounts of funds as a result of unmonitored raves in the county. Several deaths and search efforts have also resulted."

Postmus said there is still one individual missing from a rave near the Kramer Junction area approximately five years ago. Aircraft and search teams searched for the rave participant for four days. "This was one of many such incidents where public safety and taxpayer dollars were unnecessarily compromised because of this problem," he said.

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Postmus said one of the most important provisions of the new ordinance is the lowering of the threshold for requiring a permit from 500 attendees to 200. "By lowering the participation number to 200, law enforcement can act quickly to prevent the crowds and minimize the amount of law enforcement manpower needed," he said.

The ordinance allows law enforcement personnel to do the following when an event is deemed unlawful:

- Put up freeway signs to announce the cancellation of an event
- Disperse an un-permitted crowd numbering 200 or more people
- Block off ramps or access streets before the number of people reaches unmanageable numbers
- Temporarily confiscate equipment, if necessary

The ordinance also has a provision for evaluating noise on a case-by-case basis, considering such factors as topography, surroundings and ability for sound to carry. The analysis is conducted during the permit application process. If deemed necessary, music can be shut down between 11:00 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Postmus said the new ordinance will ensure raves are better controlled by the County's Rave Task Force. The Task Force consists of the following:

- A San Bernardino County Sheriff's Deputy
- A San Bernardino County Code Enforcement officer
- A San Bernardino County District Attorney Investigator
- A San Bernardino County Street Department employee
- A BLM Ranger
- A San Bernardino County Deputy District Attorney
- A CHP officer
- A CalTrans official

"I have observed the Rave Task Force in action and I think they do a good job putting down this kind of activity," Postmus said. "This ordinance will make the problem even more manageable for Land Use Services to regulate and for the Sheriff and Rave Task Force to enforce against."